

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FBO-02 SCS-03 SCCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05 CCO-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 SP-02 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00

PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01 OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 EUR-12 ACDA-07

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O P 091320Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1025

INFO SITREP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 007

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 6043

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 9: CHHRISTIANS CONTINUE PRESS
MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC ADVANTAGES

REF: BEIRUT 6001

1. SUMMARY: RIGHTIST COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN NORTH CONTINUES WITH DEFINITE GAINS IN VERY HEAVY FIGHTING. TRADITIONAL FRONTS IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE ACTIVE, AS PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AT TELL ZAATAR CONTINUES. MEDIATION EFFORTS NOW FOCUSING ON JULY 12 ARAB LEAGUE MEETING IP CAIRO. CHRISTIANS ARE CONFIDENT IN LIGHT OF MILITARY SUCCESSES AND SURMISED SYRIAN DETERMINATION CONTINUE MAJOR MILITARY ROLE IN LEBANON. JALLOUDD TELLS ARAFAT THAT SYRIANS WILL WITHDRAW PARTILLY, BUT PLO BROADCASTING ALARMIST WARNINGS OF MAJOR SYRIAN ASSAULT IN BEIRUT AREA AND PREPARING SEND DELEGATION TO MOSCOW. ZAHRANI REFINERY NEAR SIDON NOW APPEARS LIKELY TO BE INOPERATIVE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT CONSIDERABLE AMOUNF OF FUEL STILL AVAILABLE IN TAPKS. WATER AND POWER PROSPECTS FOR BEIRUT APPEAR SOMEWHAT BETTER.

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2. RIGHTIST COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN NORTH LEBANON CONTINUES,

WITH PRESS DESCRIBING BATTLES IN KOURA AS MOST MURDEROUS OF ENTIRE CIVIL WAR. PRESS CARRIES UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF MASSACRES OF FAMILIES AND OF LARGE SCALE MATERIAL DAMAGE VOICE OF LEBANON (KATAEB) SAYS IT HAS TAKEN ALL VILLAGES OF KOURA WITH EXCEPTION OF ENFE, NOW UNDER RIGHTIST ATTACK. WE UNDERSTAND CONFRONTATION LINE IS ENFE/FI'A ABOVE CHEKKA AND RIGHTIST INTEND PUSH FURTHER NORTH, THOUGH PROBABLY STOPPING MAJOR THRUST AT EL KALAMOUN AND NOT ATTEMPTING ENTER TRIPOLI. RIGHTISTS SAY THEY HAVE OCCUPIED BSRMA AND ENCIRCLED ALMA WHICH THEY NOW BOMBARDING. TRIPOLI AND ZGHORTA CONTINUE HEAVY MUTUAL BOMBARDMENTS, WITH SHELLING EXTENDING TO POSITIONS OF COMBATANTS AT MIRYATA, CARMELITE SCHOOL, KOBBE, RACHIINE, AND MAJDALIA. JULY 8 TOLL FOR NORTH LEBANON PUT AT 300 DEAD AND 450 WOUNDED.

3. BOMBARDMENTS AND ARMED CLASHES CONTINUE ALONG BEIRUT'S CENTER CITY CONFRONTATION LINE AND IN SUBURBS SOUTHWEST OF THE CITY. AT TELL ZAATAR SMALL POCKETS OF SNIPERS PERSIST AND LEFT CLAIMS TO HAVE MADE GROUND ADVANCES, WHILE RIGHTISTS CONTINUE SIEGE. ONE SOURCE REPORTS CHRISTIANS NOW BEGINNING PRESSURE ON NABAA ENCLAVE. IN THE BEKAA, SYRIAN BLOCKADES OF BAALBEK AND HERMEL CONTINUE AND THERE ARE REPORTS OF SOME ANTI-SYRIAN GUERRILLA OPERATION BY PALESTINIANS. ARTILLERY DUES CONTINUE IN THE METN, AN AREA WHICH MAY SOON BE TARGET OF SYRIAN/RIGHTIST PUSH. FOLLOWING RECENT DEFEAT AT OUYOUN ES-SIMAAH, MAJORITY OF PALESTINIAN FORCES EXFILTRATED SOUTH. CHRISTIANS AND SYRIANS WILL LIKELY ATTEMPT PUSH REST OF FEDAYEEN OUT OF AINTOURA AND OTHER METN VILLAGES. IN SOUTH, LEFTIST SOURCES CLAIM SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS AROUND SIDON RENEWED BLOCKADE OF CITY AND OVERFLIGHT OF SYRIAN AIRCRAFT. CLASHES OCCURRED BETWEEN SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS JULY 8 IN VILLAGES BETWEEN JEZZINE AND NABATIYAH. SYRIANS ARE OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT ARMS ENTRY VIA SIDON, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF OPEN SIDING OF LIBYA WITH PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFT, AND WISH BE IN PREVENTIVE POSITION. HOWEVER, TYRE REMAINS UNDER PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST CONTROL AND ISRAELI "RED LINE" WOULD PROBABLY PREVENT LARGE SCALE SYRIAN OPERATION TO BLOCK THAT ENTRY POINT AS WELL.

4. ARAB LEAGUE PREPARES TO PLAY WHAT PIERRE GEMAYEL CALLS "ITS LAST CARD WHICH, IF IT FAILS, WILL LEAD TO INTERNATIONALIZATION
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OF THE CRISIS." ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE CALLED FOR JULY 12 IN CAIRO NOW SUBJECT OF MUCH PREPARATION AMONG LEBANESE AND PALESTINIAN GROUPS. MARONITE "LEBANESE FRONT" TOLD AL DEPUTY SEC GEN HASSAN SABRI KHOLI DURING FIVE HOUR MEETING JULY 8 THAT "FRONT" WILL NOT SEND REPRESENTATIVE IF AL TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE FAILS TO SUBMIT COPY OF REPORT OF ITS LEBANON ACTIVITIES TO IT PRIOR TO MEETING, OR IF REPORT NOT FOUND NEUTRAL AND OBJECTIVE. KHOLI PROMISES

TO SUBMIT REPORT TO "FRONT" IN 36 HOURS. (ANOTHER PROBLEM IS THAT KFOUR PLANS SEND AS REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPH SALAME, THE JULY 1 APPOINTEE OF CAMILLE CHAMOUN WHOSE OWN ELEVATION TO FOREIGN MINISTERSHIP BY FRANGIE IS CONTESTED BY RACHID KARAME.) ONE CHRISTIAN SOURCE SAYS KHOLI IS OPTIMISTIC THAT CAIRO MEETING WILL RESULT IN STRONG ARAB LEAGUE POSITION SUPPORTED ON GROUND BY STRONG SYRIAN FORCES. THIS SOURCE INFERS FROM OFFICIAL SILENCE FOLLOWING KADDAM RETURN FROM MOSCOW THAT SYRIANS REFUSING TO YIELD TO SOVIET PRESSURES TO FIND RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PALESTINIANS. AT SAME TIME, LEFTIST SOURCES SAY KHOLI HOPES THAT AL CAN COME UP WITH SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT FORCES FROM AL COUNTRIES OTHER THAN SYRIA.

5. LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD, AFTER LENGTHY JULY 8 BEIRUT MEETING WITH YASIR ARAFAT AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR WENT TO DAMASCUS TO SEEK INDUCE SYRIANS PULL BACK TROOPS FROM SOFAR AND SIDON AREAS IN EXCHANGE FOR PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT TO REOPEN SAIQA OFFICES IN BEIRUT

6. PLO DELEGATION TO MOSCOW, WHICH STILL NOT DEPARTED, IN EFFECT SEARCHING FOR SUPPORT BEYOND ARAB STATES IN AN "INTERNALIZATION" EFFORT SUCH AS THEY HAVE SO FREQUENTLY CONDEMNED ON PART OF RIGHTISTS KAMAL JUNBLATT SAYS BLACKOUT ON RESULTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER ABDEL HALIM KHADDAM VISIT TO SOVIET UNION PROVES SOVIET-SYRIAN DISACCORD OVER LEBANON SITUATION.

7. ARAFAT HAS ACCUSED SYRIANS OF LAUNCHING JOINT OPERATIONS ON SIDE OF "ISOLATIONISTS" BUT RADIO DAMASCUS DENIES ALL PARTICIPATION OF SYRIAN ARMY IN LEBANESE BATTLES. WE UNDERSTAND SYRIANS ARE NOT REPEAT NOT INVOLVED IN GROUND ACTION IN NORTH, AROUND SHIKKA AND AMYUN, BUT HAVE IN CERTAIN CASES GIVEN ARTILLERY SUPPORT. HOWEVER, SYRIAN ACTION IN BEKAA AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTH HELPS REDUCE LEFTIST AND PALESTINIAN FORCES AVAILABLE FOR NORTHERN DEFENSE. THREAT PALESTINIANS FEEL IS REFLECTED IN JULY 8 CHARGE BY ARAFAT TO ANWAR SADAT THAT SYRIANS AND LEBANESE RIGHTISTS NOW PREPARING MAMMOUTH AND IMMINENT ATTACK ON NABAA ENCLAVE AND ON WEST BEIRUT ITSELF. VOICE OF PALESTINE RADIO CALLED UPON SYRIAN PEOPLE TO REVOLT AGAINST ASSAD REGIME.

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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INFO SITREP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 008

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 6043

8. CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS REPORTS (SITREP JULY 8), WE NOW INFORMED ZAHHRANI REFINERY NEAR SIDON HAS BEEN SRIOUSLY DAMAGED THOUGH PRECISE EXTENT NOT CLEAR. EVEN SHOULD SYRIANS ALLOW REFINERY REOPEN, DELAY DUE NEED OTBAIN PARTS AND REPAIRS NOW MAY PLACE PLANT OUT OF SERVICE FOR MONTHS. TAPLINE EXECUTIVE SAYS THERE IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM PRESUADING WORKERS TO RETURN. HE ESTIMATES OVER ONE MILLION BARRELS MAZOUT (USED IN GENERATORS) IN ZAHHRANI TANK FARM BUT PERCEIVES PROBLEM IN TRASNPOROT TO BEIRUT. TANK FARM CONTAINS SMALLER AMOUNT OF GASOLINE AND VERY LITTLE BUTANE. WE BELIEVE IT LIKELY SYRIANS HAVE PURPOSELY FORCED SHUTDOWN ZAHHRANI REFINERY AS PART OF CONTINUED LOW-LEVEL BLOCKADE OF BEIRUT AND UNLIKELY YRIANS WILL ALLOW REFINERY REOPEN SOON.

9. ELECTRIC POWER WAS RESTORED FOR FEW HOURS IN PARTS OF WEST BEIRUT JULY 8. AUTHORITIES REPORTED PLANNING RATION ELECTRICITY ON ROTATIONAL BASIS TO KEY INSTALLATIONS, INCLUDING HOOSPITALS AND BAKERIES. IF AND WHEN ZOUK ELECTRIC POWER PLANT (NORTH OF BEIRUTT ON COAST) RECEIVES ANTICIPATED DELIVERY OF FUEL FROM ROMANIA, HOPE IS THAT BEIRUT WILL BEGIN RECEIVEING 35 PERCENT OF ITS NORMAL CONSUMPTION. FRESH WATER LIKEWISE TO BE

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ALLOCATED TO HOSPITALS. AUH HOSPITAL SOURCE REPORTS THAT RESERVOIRS NOW CONTAIN 35 PERCENT OF CAPACITY AS RESULT WATER

FLOW OF PAST FEW DAYS.
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